

Bulletin

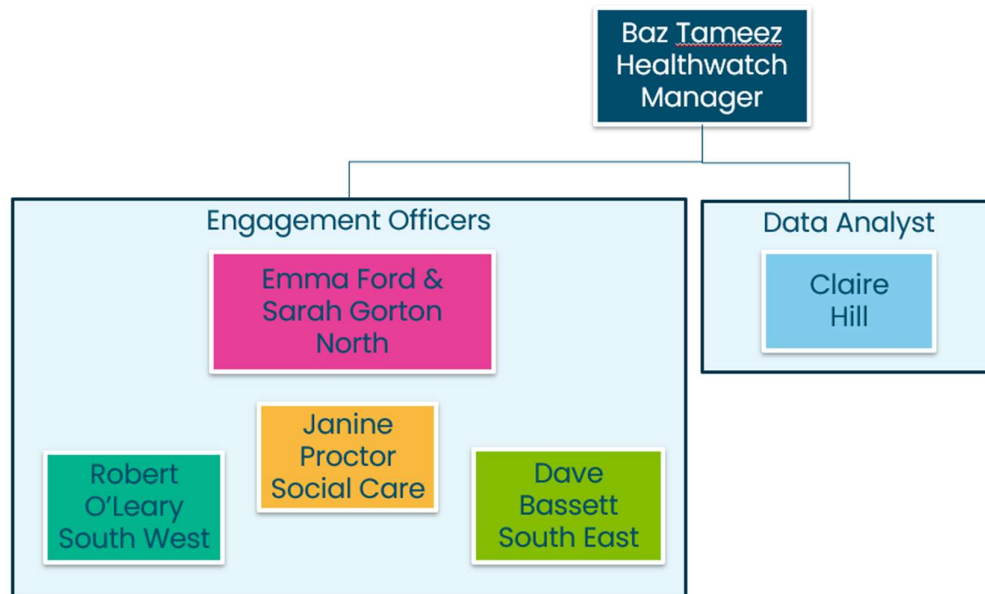
News of our activities up to the end of June 2022

Introduction to the new Healthwatch Staffordshire

Healthwatch exists at a National and Local level. Healthwatch Staffordshire is an independent watchdog that works to make local health and social care services better for people by ensuring that their views and experiences are taken into account by those entrusted to design and run services. Healthwatch Staffordshire covers all council areas in Staffordshire except for Stoke on Trent which has its own Healthwatch.

Support Staffordshire takes over the service

In April 2022 Support Staffordshire took over the contract for Healthwatch Staffordshire. Over the last few months, the new team has come together. To put faces to the names, please visit [Meet The Team](#) on our website.



We have been busy completing inductions and training and getting to grips with the many Healthwatch Systems, including the freephone number which is now fully operational.

Some of our first steps have been to start updating our publicity materials including the website, social media accounts and a simple flyer. Staff have also been out and about, starting to rebuild networks with the public and our partners, as well as our colleagues at other regional Healthwatch organisations.

Read on to find out what we have been up to until the end of June ...

Local Feedback & Themes

Access to Dental Care

Access to dental care remains an issue across the county. Unfortunately, this is a national problem which Healthwatch England have taken up with the Department of Health. The advice is to try and get on a waiting list at several dentists for when they do start to take on new patients.

In the meantime, if you are experiencing dental problems, please visit <https://www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/dental-services> Alternatively you can ring them on 0300 123 0981. They will provide you with details of how to access emergency dental care in Staffordshire.



Proof of Covid Vaccination for Travel

Since the easing of Covid restrictions more people are travelling abroad again. For some countries proof of vaccination has been required. Usually this can be found through the NHS App, but we were approached for help on a number of occasions by people who couldn't secure proof they needed. Through liaison with the local vaccination coordinators, we were able to assist people to find the proof they needed and go on to enjoy their holidays.



Making Complaints

We have received feedback from several Staffordshire residents and organisations that they would like clarity on the difference between NHS Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) and NHS Complaints and how to access them. In response we have produced a leaflet explaining the difference and listing the contact details for the main NHS organisations that deliver services to Staffordshire patients. We also include a link to Asist who will advise and support people through the process of making complaints.



Local Engagement

Stoke Pride

Emma & Sarah, two of Healthwatch Staffordshire's engagement officers had a great time when they attended Stoke Pride. They were able to interact with local residents and hear about peoples' experiences of using local health and social care services. As a result of listening to people we are now putting together a survey about gender affirmation.



Diabetes & Me

We have been working with East Staffordshire and Surrounds Diabetes UK Patient Network Group, who have successfully highlighted gaps in the provision of a community diabetes service in the Southeast of the County. These are now being addressed in partnership with the local NHS. The Group organised an awareness event called "Diabetes and Me" at Pirelli Stadium highlighting patient experiences both locally and abroad as well as reminding us all that Diabetes and its complications consume around 10% of the whole NHS Budget.



Dementia Action Week 2022

On Wednesday 18th May we attended the Dementia Action Week event at Affinity Shopping Centre in Talke. The event was to raise awareness of Dementia and to let people know the support that is available. It was well attended, and we were one of about eight stalls.

During the day we spoke with people who did, and did not, have a diagnosis of dementia. We signposted people to organisations where they could find social support, ones where they could receive advice on benefits, and heard that not everyone has access to smart 'phones and computers, which leads to being excluded from certain activities.

During the day we took part in a joint interview with Healthwatch Stoke on HitMix FM, which meant we could get the Healthwatch message out to a larger audience.



VCSE Locality Forums

Staff attended 5 of these quarterly forums to meet with the public and our partners. Dave, Sarah and Emma attended forums in Newcastle, Tamworth, Burton, Lichfield and Staffordshire Moorlands.



National Issues

Changes to the organisation of Health & Social Care

At the start of July we will see the introduction of the Integrated Care System (ICS) which shakes up how health and social care is organised. According to the [NHS England website](#).



Integrated care systems (ICSs) are partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area.



From July we will be working with our local Integrated Care System, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICS; the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) will be replaced with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). For more information on these changes please visit www.staffsstokeics.org.uk



Healthwatch England

System Changes: The current Healthwatch database CiviCRM will no longer be supported by Healthwatch England from March 2023 and we are now considering our option going forwards.

Regional Healthwatch organisations have each been provided with a free licence for Smart Survey to help run and analyse online surveys.

Recent Campaigns: The [‘Your Care, Your Way’](#) survey has been looking at accessible information for health and social care. This survey considered the experience of people who required support with their communication needs.

Coming up in July

- Check out our [Events section](#) to see where you can meet up with us
- Potential Deep Dives – we are reviewing themes in our feedback to decide topics worthy of a closer investigation
- Our first Smart Survey

Get in touch

Healthwatch Staffordshire

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